

# ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

*December 2009*

Dear Friends,

Sunday, November 29, was the first Sunday of Advent. Advent, at least in our part of the world, begins almost concurrently with the shortening of days. There are more hours of darkness than light during the month of Advent. Daylight hours begin to lengthen near the end of December, this year around December 21. At first this phenomenon is imperceptible but nevertheless light begins to overtake the darkness.

Advent for us Episcopalians is truly a time that disrupts our spiritual journey. When we put aside the preparations for celebration, and even in the midst of them, we are invited to be mindful of what God has done for us. God has moved us, once and for all, out of spiritual darkness into the glorious light of love and salvation.

Each year the church invites us again to imagine again the waiting in the darkness. Each year the church calls us to contemplate why we wait, what we wait for and what God is giving us. In the midst of the spiritual darkness we know that the appropriate response to this kind of waiting is joy, anticipation, excitement. No wonder we see our children breathless with hope and certainty that something wonderful will happen on Christmas day.

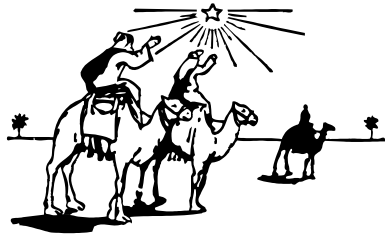
In a way the Christmas celebrations and traditions of our families are sacramental. They really are outward signs of the underlying truth of the magnanimity of God. The presents, the decorations, the food, the gathering of friends and family are all outward signs of God's grace and love for us. Preparing for these celebrations each year sometimes can be overwhelming, I know. Shopping, cooking, decorating and having it all done by December 24<sup>th</sup> (usually), is a lot of work. But it is worth it in the end. I have never heard anyone say they were sorry or regretted all the preparation on Christmas Day.

These preparations we make this month are another outward sign of what Advent is about. When I think of this I am reminded of John the Baptist's famous words, "Prepare the way of the Lord." If we spend our Advent time motivated by this invitation of John, all our preparations will have the intent of Advent in them.

Waiting can be aggravating, I know. But when we wait for something that is a guaranteed blessing the waiting has a different nature. It is filled with confidence. It invites breathless anticipation. Sometimes the waiting and anticipation is so filled with excitement we don't want the waiting itself to end.

Our Advent waiting ends by God's will. It ends with the greatest of God's gifts. Our Advent ends with God's self entering into our personal and communal lives in Jesus Christ. This great gift is never ending. It is the ultimate gift of love.

This year, as we wait again for our celebrations at church and home, let's remember that this waiting time brings us out of the darkness into the light. And that light of Christ overpowers all darkness for all time. Let's wait with joy!



## Christmas Pageant 2009

Is it that time already? Yes, it is time to give it some thought and get the dates on the calendars!

Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> – 10AM  
Christmas Pageant

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> – 9AM  
Lead characters

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> - 10AM  
Full cast

Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> – 10AM  
During Sunday School

Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> – 10AM  
Rehearsal after Children's Sermon (Family Sunday)

If you know now your child/children might have a conflict with the pageant and/or these particular rehearsals, please let me know and I can cast them accordingly.

Everyone child is welcome to participate and urged to do so!!!

Please see me, call me, or email me:  
Ellen Ryan  
Or  
Natalie Wicks



## CATECHESIS CORNER

The main message for Catechesis families this month is that **there will be no classes held in December.** This is because we hope that all children will be involved in the pageant, which will be rehearsed and presented on Sundays. Please let Ellen Ryan know your interest. Also, let one of us know if your child does not wish to participate, and we would try to open the Atrium during rehearsal.

During November, we started presenting some of the pre-nativity stories, about the visitation of the Angel to Mary, and later visit of Mary to her Aunt Elizabeth (do you know that one? Ask your child.). And, we introduced Advent. All of this helps children understand what Christmas is all about, and the idea of 'excited waiting'. The Nativity story itself they will learn and present during the pageant.

Due to low attendance, **the Nov 15<sup>th</sup> orientation for Catechechists and assistants will be rescheduled for January** – please watch your email; we'll try to find a date that works for more people. With so many people involved in the program, for which we are very grateful, it is important that all know what it is about, and what is expected in the Atrium. This may also be of interest for parents and others.

We wish all families a very Merry Christmas! And we look forward to resuming classes in early January.

*Amanda Hubbard and Ellen Ryan*

# Elementary Sunday School News

Dear Friends,

We have been having great fun in the Elementary classrooms. The children have learned about what it means to be a saint and touched on the lives of some of our saints. We enjoyed baking cheesy dog biscuits for our four-legged friends in need at our local MSPCA animal shelter, Nevin's Farm of Tewksbury. The parable of the rich man was experienced first hand by taking turns being the rich man fully laden with treasure and attempting to climb through small hoops. Some children created a paper version of this story to share with their siblings.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers who make our Sunday school program possible, our teachers: Chris Thompson, Becky Ricci, Mary Curlew, Stacy Schalick, Sima Seymourian, Carol Wait, Dori Pulizzi, Andrea Hayes, Kelly Anderson, Deborah Regan, Susan Adamik, Shanie George, Carolyn Martin, Scott Thompson, Philip Thompson, Nate Presti, Chris Adamik, and Ben Johnson. Our singers: Ellen Ryan, Amanda Hubbard, Mary Curlew and John Mitchell faithfully provide music each week as the children gather for Sunday school. I'd especially like to thank our youth volunteers whose vibrant leadership and willingness to help out on a whim has been an invaluable resource and a wonderful inspiration to all the children they work with.

Cathy Presti

## 5th Grade Poetic Reflections on Saints

Newsletter

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**A** wesome  
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**T** eacher

Helen

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**A** ll different and special  
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Emma

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Allan

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Felicia ☺

Hannah

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**A** mazing  
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**N** arnia the book was made  
by a saint  
**T** o be a saint you have to  
be good, kind and follow  
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Sania ★

★Justin ☺

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## **Middle School Youth Group Update**

The Advent Fair is on Saturday, December 5th and we need your help!! Thanks to all who responded already with their offers of help organizing books, delivering baskets to the church, running children's activities and being in the face-painting/tattooing room. Please contact Mrs. Mathews or Mrs. Baker if you can help with anything, any time on this very big day for St. Paul's!

We had a good conversation about bullying during our in-class discussion on November 1st. Please be sure and attend December's discussion on Sunday, December 6th - we'll be meeting in the back classroom so the junior choir can use the library after their anthem.

Thanks for all of your help during the Christmas cookie baking/decorating and care package-assembling event on November 29th. It was fun to join forces with the High School Youth Group and we know that the goodies will be very much appreciated by their recipients!

Remember those plates of cookies we put together on the 29th? Please join us on Sunday, December 13th for the St. Paul's Annual Christmas Caroling event. We will be meeting at the church at 4:30 and will then participate in the caroling & progressive dinner. It's a fun time and we really want middle school participation to hand out plates of cookies to elderly members of the parish along our caroling route.

One thing that is true about this middle school group: you are busy people! We were unable to find a date in November that worked for more than 2 people for laser tag, but we'll try again in the December/January timeframe. We'll also see who is interested in snow tubing at Nashoba Valley. Stay tuned. . .

Happy December!  
*Mrs. Mathews & Mrs. Baker*

## Notes from the Nursery School



November was a busy month for the preschool. We started with a unit on trucks which culminated in a visit from the DPW with some large trucks to climb in and over. It was great fun. Then we moved on to Thanksgiving, talking about harvest, Native Americans, and how we celebrate the holiday. We will enjoy our annual "Thanksgiving Tea" on the day before the holiday. We will all have a special snack together, sing some songs and listen to a Thanksgiving story.

Our Open House and third annual Holiday Gift Boutique were held this month. The Open House was well attended; families brought their little ones and stayed for most of the two hours talking to the staff. We have received several applications for next year already. Our Holiday gift boutique fundraiser was a success. It was a beautiful day and many people came out to shop for gifts, to enjoy baked goods, and to visit with friends. I want to thank St Paul's for their support in these endeavors.

Lee Frank

## GIVE TO ST. PAUL'S WHILE YOU SHOP!

If you're doing Christmas shopping on Amazon this year, don't forget to visit St. Paul's website first! Just go to [www.stpaulsbedford.org](http://www.stpaulsbedford.org) and click on the Amazon link on the left-hand navigation bar. You'll be taken directly to Amazon, and a portion of every purchase you make will be donated to St. Paul's. Shop early, shop often, and visit our website first!

## VESTRY CORNER

The annual Diocesan Convention was held November 6 and 7 at Trinity Copley in Boston. Frank, Paul Ciaccia, and I attended as representatives of St. Paul's, and enjoyed a great two days of worship, fellowship, and doing the Lord's work. We reviewed the Diocese's mission strategy, approved the budget, experienced different forms of worship in different languages, heard homilies from Bishop Shaw and reports from many constituencies and committees, and visited with many friends of our parish, including Rev. Matt Kruger. We encourage any and all of you to attend convention in the future—it's a great way to experience the wider Episcopal community in Massachusetts.

Christmas is upon us already, believe it or not. You'll find the service schedule elsewhere in the Epistle. Please note that this year, the Caroling and Progressive Supper and the Christmas pageant will be held on different Sundays—December 13 and December 20, respectively. We've had too many snowstorms in the past few years that have forced postponement and cancellation of these events, so we thought we'd improve our odds by splitting them up this year. We hope many of you can participate in the caroling and join the children and youth for the pageant.

Many blessings to you and all you care about this holiday season. Rejoice!

Best,

*Emily Mitchell*

## Announcements

Announcements are an important part of our Sundays together, as we keep each other informed about the many different ways St. Paul's contributes to the work of the church in Bedford and beyond. They also contribute to a longer service, however, which can pull us out of the worship mindset and can make visitors feel left out.

The vestry would like to remind everyone that announcements should be specific to St. Paul's: parish events, committee news, and the like. Please let Frank know before the service what you plan to announce, so he can tailor his own announcements and help keep that portion of the service concise. Members who have news that doesn't fit in the above categories can take advantage of the announcement board in the narthex, coffee hour, and the Parishioners' Corner section of the Epistle. We also plan to continue with periodic parish emails, so announcements can be sent to Emily for inclusion there.

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak to Frank or Emily.



# OUTREACH NEWS

## Help us "UNDECORATE" our Giving Tree

Help make the holidays brighter for 60 residents of Fernald State School. These adults are severely multi-handicapped and many have no families. If the state stays on target, this will be the last year our Giving Tree gifts will go to the residents of Fernald, as the facility is scheduled to close this year.

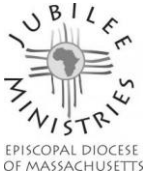
On the First Sunday of Advent, our Giving Tree will be decorated with ornaments listing specific requests for each resident. Please sign up to purchase a gift and take the ornament to attach to your wrapped gift. We also welcome \$5 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts for staff who care for these residents. Gifts are due back at St. Paul's on December 13.



## OUTREACH AT ADVENT FAIR

Heifer cards

African jewelry



## Mugs for sale at coffeehour Dec 13 and Dec 20

**1000 mugs for South Africa** is raising money for public education in the Khethani township, South Africa. Through the sale of a thousand handmade pottery mugs, they are raising money for a school library. Marlene Nelson's dream of making and selling a thousand mugs to support children in South Africa was carried out with the help of her clay colleagues and friends at Harvard's Ceramics Program. Bishop Shaw, who is himself a potter, has been involved with this effort.



For more information on this project, contact Katie West.

## Living Nativity

*Saturday December 12 — 5pm and 7pm*

*Sunday, December 13 — 5pm and 7pm*



Change in location! Former Overlook Farm Director, Dale Perkins, will hold the Living Nativity at his farm, Mesa Farm at 67 Muschopauge Road in Rutland. No charge, but attendees are invited to bring a plate of cookies to share. Hot chocolate will be available and carol singing will be included in the evening activities. For more information on the Living Nativity event, please contact: [dale.mesafarm@gmail.com](mailto:dale.mesafarm@gmail.com)

Less than 2 miles away, Heifer Learning Center at Overlook Farm will be conducting a Celebration of Living Gifts on December 12 and 13 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Heifer International's Celebration of Living Gifts, learn how sponsoring animals can provide food and income for hungry families. Take pictures with the animals and purchase gifts from around the world. Enjoy hot cocoa and cider, make gingerbread animal cookies and warm yourself by a bonfire. Admission: Canned goods which will be donated to a local food bank.

## Keep those tab tops coming!



Tab tops continue to be sent to the Shriner's Burn Hospital, which in turn are combined with other organizations' tabs. The tabs contain metal which the Shriner's Hospital extracts and sells. All proceeds are used to help pay bills for the families that incur debts when they stay at various hotels to be near their children, who are in the Shriner's Hospital.

Also, Ed Lawrence is always collecting cans/bottles to retrieve deposits to help support the National Guard Veterans for their every day expenses. Thanks!

"To all of our friends at St. Paul's- Thank you so much for all of the support and prayers during the very difficult time after Maddy's accident. It was frightening, exhausting, and stressful, but the love and support you showed us helped us get through it with faith and hope. A friend said to me that we must have felt so alone at times, but honestly, we never did. We knew that all of you were holding us in your hearts and prayers, and we truly felt surrounded by that love. The meals, cards, and gifts were so appreciated and another wonderful way in which we felt your love and support. We also were deeply touched by the generous donation which was made in Maddy's name to Children's Hospital. What a special honor for our little girl. Thank you for everything. We are so blessed to be a part of St. Paul's Church.

Chris, Chris, Maddy, Parker & Noah  
The Anderson & LaPorte family"



## Parking Lot



Please remember that the clergy space in the parking lot is reserved only during the week, not on Sunday mornings. Feel free to park there before the worship service, particularly if you need to be closer to the front door. Overflow parking is also available across the street



## Annual Christmas Caroling and Progressive Supper

The date has been set ( December 13) for the Annual St. Paul's Christmas Caroling and Progressive supper.

For those of you who haven't participated in prior years here's how it works. We will meet at the Church and travel by car to various parishioners homes (including Carleton Willard) to sing Christmas Carols. We will make 3 stops along the way to enjoy appetizers by Sue and Paul Runkle, dinner by Chuck and Frank and dessert by Sima and Bruce Seymourian.

This is a wonderful event and everyone is invited to participate (children are welcome).

A sign up sheet is posted on the church bulletin board. Please sign up by Dec 16 so the host families will have sufficient time to prepare enough food. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Ciaccia.

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**The schedule of Christmas services is as follows:**

Sunday, December 20, 10:00am: Christmas pageant and Eucharist

Thursday, December 24, 3:00pm: Children's Christmas Eve service

Thursday, December 24, 9:30pm: Carol singing

Thursday, December 24, 10:00pm: Christmas Eve Eucharist

Friday, December 25, 10:00am: Christmas Day service

## Parishioner's Corner



"Happy 1st birthday to Noah Anderson-LaPorte!"

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
100 Pine Hill Road  
Bedford, MA 01730**

**Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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Bedford MA 01730  
Permit No. 11**

Sunday Service of Holy Eucharist: 10:00 a.m.

Office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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Fax: 781 687-9070

E-mail: [info@stpaulsbedford.org](mailto:info@stpaulsbedford.org)

*Staff:*

The Reverend Francis Fornaro, Rector

Tracy Lane, Parish Administrator

Joan Reddy, Music Director

Bob Godoy, Sexton

*Officers:*

Emily Mitchell, Senior Warden

Paul Ciaccia, Junior Warden

Betsey Anderson, Treasurer

Carol Hokana, Clerk

*Vestry:*

Andre Barber

Sue Runkle

Sharon Healey

Natalie Wicks

John MacPhee

Dori Pulizzi

## **Prayer for Advent**

God in heaven,  
Our hearts desire the warmth  
of your love and our minds  
are searching for the light of  
your Word.

Increase our longing for  
Christ our Savior and give us  
the strength to grow in love,  
that the dawn of his coming  
may find us rejoicing in his  
presence and welcoming the  
light of his truth.

